

Message Text

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43

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 EB-11 COME-00 TRSE-00 SCEM-02

INT-08 DRC-01 FAA-00 CAB-09 DOTE-00 /167 W

----- 122682

R 131601Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5438

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRN, FR

SUBJECT: CIVAIR: FRENCH FUEL-SAVING MEASURES

SUMMARY: FRENCH AIR CARRIERS WILL ANNOUNCE LATER THIS MONTH MEASURES PROPOSED FOR EFFECTING 10 PERCENT REDUCTION IN FUEL CONSUMPTION AT REQUEST OF GOF. CAPACITY LIMITATION TALKS ARE DRAGGING WITH OTHER EUROPEAN AIRLINES. RENEWAL OF AIR FRANCE FLEET WILL BE SLOWED DOWN AND ENTRY INTO SERVICE OF CONCORDE DELAYED UNTIL END 1975. GOF MAY IMPOSE SOME RESTRICTIONS ON REFUELING OF FOREIGN CARRIERS MAINLY AS RESULT OF RUN ON FRENCH FUEL STOCKS BY SOME FOREIGN AIRLINES. AIR FRANCE HAS ALREADY CUT BACK ON SEVERAL FLIGHTS TO NORTH AMERICA AND FAR EAST. END SUMMARY

1. AT PRESS CONFERENCE DEC. 12, PIERRE COT, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF AIR FRANCE, INDICATED THAT FRENCH CARRIERS WOULD ANNOUNCE PRIOR END OF THIS MONTH MEASURES THEY WERE PROPOSING TO REDUCE FUEL CONSUMPTION BY TEN
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PERCENT AT GOF REQUEST (PARIS 31051 NOTAL). COT INDICATED

THAT 58 PERCENT OF AIR FRANCE REFUELING IS DONE ABROAD AND OPERATIONAL DIFFICULTIES CONTINUE TO BE ENCOUNTERED BECAUSE OF SUPPLY PROBLEMS AT CERTAIN POINTS SUCH AS ANCHORAGE, MONTREAL, AND NEAR EAST AND FAR EAST ROUTES. NO SUPPLY PROBLEMS YET EXIST FOR AIR FRANCE IN SOUTH AMERICA OR AFRICA.

2. COT SAID GREATEST SAVING IN FUEL OVER SHORT TERM WOULD RESULT FROM CAPACITY REDUCTIONS, AND IN THIS REGARD AIR FRANCE'S TALKS WITH PANAM WERE FARTHER ALONG THAN THEY WERE WITH OTHER EUROPEAN CARRIERS. REDUCTION IN CRUISING SPEEDS AND OTHER TECHNICAL MEASURES INCLUDING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POSSIBLE CHANGES IN AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL PROCEDURES WERE ALSO UNDER STUDY. AIR FRANCE HAD ALSO DECIDED TO SLOW DOWN EQUIPMENT RENEWAL AND EXPECTED PLACE GREATER EMPHASIS ON USE OF BOEING 747'S AND THE NEW AIRBUS WHICH HAD BETTER FUEL CONSUMPTION ON SEAT/MILE BASIS THAN BOEING 707, FOR EXAMPLE.

3. QUESTIONED BY PRESS ON FUTURE OF CONCORDE BECAUSE OF ITS MUCH HIGHER RATE OF FUEL CONSUMPTION THAN SUBSONIC AIRCRAFT, COT SAID THAT ENTRY INTO SERVICE OF CONCORDE WOULD BE DELAYED UNTIL END OF 1975 BY WHICH TIME FUEL SITUATION MAY HAVE IMPROVED. COT EXPLAINED THAT AIR FRANCE IS COMMITTED TO PLACE ITS CONCORDES IN SERVICE AT SAME TIME AS DID BRITISH AIRWAYS, AND APPARENTLY THERE HAS BEEN SOME SLIPPAGE IN DATE FOR DELIVERY OF BRITISH-BUILT CONCORDES. (AFP REPORTS SLIPPAGE STEMS FROM STRIKES THAT HAVE AFFECTED BAC CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE.)

4. COT SAID THAT IF FUEL PRICES SHOULD INCREASE IN 1974, FARES AND RATES WOULD HAVE TO BE INCREASED FURTHER BEYOND 6 PERCENT INCREASE IATA HAS ALREADY PROPOSED EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1. HE FORESAW NO NEED TO LAY OFF AIR FRANCE FLIGHT PERSONNEL AND THOUGHT THAT SLOWDOWN IN RECRUITMENT WOULD SUFFICE TO KEEP EMPLOYMENT AT NEEDED LEVEL.

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5. IN DISCUSSING MEASURES WHICH FRENCH CARRIERS WOULD PROPOSE AND GOF APPROVE FOR REDUCING FUEL CONSUMPTION, COT SAID THAT ECONOMY MEASURES WOULD ALSO HAVE TO APPLY TO FOREIGN CARRIERS REFUELING IN FRANCE. WHEN EMBASSY QUERIED AIR FRANCE AS TO JUST WHAT COT HAD IN MIND RE FOREIGN CARRIERS, WE WERE TOLD THAT REFERENCE WAS TO LIKELIHOOD OF SOME GOF GENERAL LIMITATION ON GENERAL AVAILABILITY OF FUEL TO CARRIERS ALONG LINE OF MEASURES

INTRODUCED IN US. WE WERE TOLD THAT GOF WAS INCLINED TO IMPOSE SUCH RESTRICTIONS BECAUSE OF ABUSE BY CERTAIN FOREIGN CARRIERS WHICH IN ABSENCE OF RESTRICTIONS HAD RAIDED FUEL STOCKS ESPECIALLY AT AIRPORTS IN SOUTHERN FRANCE.

6. AIR FRANCE INFORMED US THAT NEW FUEL-SAVING MEASURES TO BE ANNOUNCED SHORTLY WOULD BE IN ADDITION TO THOSE ALREADY TAKEN ON CERTAIN ROUTES FOR THE NOVEMBER-DECEMBER PERIOD AS FOLLOWS: ELIMINATION OF MONTREAL STOP ON PARIS-LOS ANGELES FLIGHTS; ELIMINATION OF THREE FLIGHTS (DURING THE TWO MONTH PERIOD) ON THE PARIS-HOUSTON-MEXICO ROUTE; SUBSTITUTION OF ONE 747 FLIGHT FOR TWO 707 FLIGHTS ON PARIS-MONTREAL-CHICAGO ROUTE; ELIMINATION OF TWO CARGO FLIGHTS AND ONE PASSENGER/CARGO MIXED FLIGHT WEEKLY ON PARIS-ANCHORAGE-TOKYO ROUTE.IRWIN

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